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ABSTRACT

A study of the dynamics of institutional development for colleges and universities serving low-income students is summarized. Specific study objectives were as follows: to determine the general factors associated with the direction of development (growth, stability, stagnation or decline) for institutions receiving substantial support from Title III of the Higher Education Act; to identify developmental activities that seem to be serving their function well, in terms both of federal intent and institutional needs and purpose; to ascertain the types of impacts and consequences that these activities might have on institutional condition; and to identify the factors associated with positive impact and consequences. Twenty publicly-controlled and 32 privately-controlled institutions were selected randomly from those with prime Title III grants effective in the 1981-1982 academic year. This sample included 27 traditionally black and 24 nonblack institutions, and 10 two-year and 41 four-year institutions. Each institution was asked to nominate up to 12 development activities that had made a positive difference with activities to be drawn from each of three areas: fiscal, administrative, and educational and support program improvement. Findings at the institutional level and at the activity level are summarized. (SW)

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RESEARCH TRIANGLE INSTITUTE

CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL STUDIES

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The Anatomy of Institutional Development for Higher Education Institutions Serving Students from Low-Income Backgrounds

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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This is an executive summary of the final report of work performed under contract Number 300-80-0830 with the U.S. Department of Education for a study of factors affecting institutional development and viability. The interpretations of the findings are those of the authors, who served principal roles in the investigation, and do not necessarily represent any formal conclusions or interpretations of the U.S. Department of Education.

Executive Summary: The Anatomy of Institutional Development for Higher Education Institutions Serving Students from Low-Income Backgrounds

A. Nature of This Statement

This is a summary of the final technical report, of the title shown, of case studies of the developmental status and fiscal viability of 51 institutions of higher education, substantially funded in 1981-82 and the 4 or 5 prior academic years under Title III of the Higher Education Act. The study was conducted under contract with the Department of Education (ED) by the Research Triangle Institute (RTI), with initial assistance from its subcontractor, the Center for Systems and Program Development (CSPD), over the period from October 1, 1981 through October 31, 1983. Authority for the study is the General Education Provisions Act of 1974 (20 U.S.C. 1226C), which requires the Department of Education to define or otherwise determine goals and objectives for all Federally supported education programs. The inquiry grew out of an earlier formal examination of the intent and purposes of the original 1965 legislation, subsequent amendments and reenactments, and related regulations; and an evaluability assessment of program management, conducted under contract with ED by RTI and CSPD in 1980-81, that is elsewhere reported.[1/]

B. The Enabling Legislation for the Institutional Assistance Program

Title III of the Higher Education Act is the major source of direct Federal support to U.S. institutions of higher education, with FY 82 grant awards totaling $124,416,000, involving 537 colleges and universities as prime grantees, in the 1981-82 academic year (the allocation for the following year was $134,416,000). The original legislation was Title III of the Higher Education Act of 1965; the current authority is Title III of the Higher Education Act of 1980 (Public Law 96-374). The stated purpose is "to improve the academic quality, institutional management, and fiscal stability of eligible institutions, in order to increase their self-sufficiency and strengthen their capacity to make a substantial contribution to the higher education resources of the Nation," (HEA Title III, 1980, Part A), and, "to provide for a program of short-term federal assistance to strengthen the planning, management, and fiscal capabilities of institutions with special needs' (HEA Title III, 1980, Part B).

Institutions must establish eligibility for award on the basis of a formula emphasizing high proportions of students from low-income families, and

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1/ Davis, J. A., & Ironside, R. A. An Evaluability Assessment of the Strengthening Developing Institutions Program. Research Triangle Park, NC: Research Triangle Institute. Report No. RTI/2102/01F of September 1981.

limited institutional resources as evidenced by modest per-student educational and general expenditures. Awards are competitive for eligible institutions. Developmental activity may be proposed in the following areas prescribed by the statute: faculty development; funds and administrative management; development and improvement of academic programs; acquisition of equipment for use in strengthening funds management and academic programs; joint use of facilities such as libraries and laboratories; and student services.

Administrative responsibility for the Title III Program is vested in the Division of Institutional Development of the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education, U.S. Department of Education.

C. The Purpose of the Contracted Inquiry

The general purpose of the inquiry was to determine in what ways specially supported developmental activity--through Title III or other external sources--may contribute to the improvement, self-sufficiency (independence from continuing Title III support), and fiscal viability of higher education institutions of limited resources serving low-income students; how this external support contributes; and what general institutional practices are associated with improvement of institutional condition in terms of quality of educational program and prospects for survival. More specifically, study objectives were: to determine the general factors associated with the direction of overall development (growth; stability; stagnation or decline) for institutions receiving substantial Title III support; to identify developmental activities that seemed to be serving their function well, in terms both of Federal intent and institutional needs and purpose; to ascertain the types of impacts and consequences that these activities might have on institutional condition; and to identify the factors associated with positive impact and consequences.

The overall objective was not to evaluate the impact of the Title III program, the quality of program management, nor institutional compliance with the rules and regulations. This was neither our mandated purpose nor our intent. Rather, the study was directed toward providing a better basis for understanding the dynamics of institutional development, as a guide for institutional and program managers concerned with maximizing the potential of the Federal investment for achieving the intent of the legislation.

D. The Sample of Institutions and Developmental Activities

1. The Sample of Institutions

Twenty publicly controlled and 31 privately controlled institutions were selected at random from among those with prime Title III grants effective in the 1981-82 academic year, that had been continuously funded for the 4 or 5 preceding years, and that had received annual awards averaging $200,000 or more per annum over that period. The sampling strategy was directed toward identifying institutions that had had significant support over a sufficient time so that detectable impact on institutional condition and viability would seem reasonable.

The group of 51 public and private institutions included 27 traditionally black and 24 non-black institutions, and 10 2-year and 41 4-year institutions. Head-count enrollment in the fall of 1980 ranged from about 475 to 9,200. The founding dates ranged from 1838 to 1967; median 1980 per-student educational and general expenditures were approximately $4,200 for the public 2-year institutions, $3,600 for the public 4-year institutions, and $4,800 for the private 4-year institutions.

2. The Sample of Activities

Each institution involved was asked to nominate up to 12 developmental activities that had "made a positive difference," with activities to be drawn from each of three areas or domains: fiscal, administrative, and educational and support program improvement. From these nominations, one activity in each of the three domains was mutually agreed to for intensive study. Thus the sampling of activities was decidedly not random, but purposive in terms of study intent to identify and understand success experiences.

Activities selected for special review included 48 in the administrative domain, 39 in the fiscal domain, and 63 in the program domain. Administrative improvement activities involved management information system development (10 activities); planning, management, and evaluation system development (11 activities); institutional research (11 activities); long-range planning (5 activities); and 11 miscellaneous activities (administrator training, self-study, program evaluation, etc.). Fiscal improvement activities included fiscal accounting system development (22 activities); resource enhancement and development of fund raising capability (11 activities); and improvement of fiscal planning and management (6 activities). Program improvement activities involved development of new programs or majors (10 activities); strengthening or upgrading existing programs (12 activities); enhancements to or improvement of instruction (16 activities), and student support services, (including basic skills development as well as counseling, tutoring, etc.) (25 activities).

3. The Conduct of the Site Visits

Site visits of 2 days' duration were made, during the 1982-83 academic year, to each of the 51 institutions by teams of three specialists: one in fiscal management, one in higher education administration, and one in program evaluation. Visits were preceded by the collection and study of various documents of ED and public record, including Title III application and award materials; a 5-year history of revenue, expenditures, balance sheet items, enrollment, student aid, and similar data from the annual Higher Education General Information Surveys (HEGIS) and reports of Pell Grant and other campus-based student aid awards; college catalogs; and other relevant materials volunteered in advance by the participating institutions, such as presidents' annual reports, self-studies, accrediting commission reports, and the like. These documents were supplemented by materials reviewed or collected on site, including, in particular, the most recent independent annual audit report.

In the visits, each specialist conducted semi-structured interviews and made directed observations to accomplish two objectives: (1) to obtain an understanding of the history, functioning, and condition of the institution in the assigned domain; and (2) to review in depth the preselected developmental activity in his or her area of interest and expertise, to determine its history,

nature, impact in terms of its objectives, and its consequences for the broader development of the institution. Individual and group interviews were variously conducted with the president, the chief fiscal and academic officers, the other administrative officers and staff members, the Title III coordinator, the selected Activity directors and their staffs, and selected faculty and students; the number of individuals interviewed ranged generally from 15 to 30 per institution.

4. The Foci of the Analyses

The detailed reports of site visitors and the various materials collected were studied intensively by three analysts representing the three domains, and who had been involved (with other staff and highly specialized consultants) in the site visits. Two discrete foci were involved in this review. First, at the overall institutional level, attention was given to abstracting general factors associated with program quality, good administrative practices, and fiscal viability, to provide an overall evaluation of institutional development and viability. Second, the developmental activities were examined to determine the factors and conditions associated with their specific impact and consequences.

E. Summary of Findings: Institutional Level Analyses

1. Strategy for the Institutional Level Analyses

For the institutional level analyses, institutions were first judged, using criteria reflecting their progress over the 5-year period and their current condition, in each of the three domains, and placed in one of four categories: "strong" in all domains, "stable" or "neutral" in all domains; "vulnerable" or "at risk" in all domains; or "mixed," with variable ratings in the three domains. This yielded 9 strong institutions, 20 stable institutions, 8 vulnerable institutions, and 14 with mixed ratings. The distribution of traditionally black institutions among these categories did not differ significantly from the distribution of non-black institutions; public institutions tended strongly to fall in the stable and mixed categories. The most distinguishing criterion variable among a large number applied in reaching the judgments was the 1981 unrestricted current fund balance; median values for the institutions in the four groups were, for the strong institutions, $314,000; for the stable, $161,000; for the mixed, $92,000; and for the vulnerable, minus $295,000. At least two of the strong institutions had attained that condition by effective retrenchment, rather than by growth.

The strategy for the institutional level analyses involved the abstraction of factors--circumstances, forces, actions or inactions, etc.--that distinguished the institutions in the several groups, and that might explain the differences in developmental status.

2. Findings: Factors Associated with Institutional Viability

In the contrasts of the strong with the vulnerable institutions, two principal distinguishing factors emerge. One has to do with the central role and distinctive posture of the president; the other has to do with the process of planning.

a. The Distinctive Functioning of the President in the Strong Institutions

The President as a Forceful Leader and Manager: The presidents of the strong institutions emerge clearly as a principal force in institutional development. They share a number of characteristics that appear crucial to the strength and viability their institutions have attained, which involve qualities of both good management and of leadership. They are clearly the prime decisionmakers for the institution, realistic in their assessment of its problems, but creative and positive with regard to its potential. Their priorities are well-ordered, exhibiting a keen sense of mission and market, and its match with what the institution has to offer. They are knowledgeable about success experiences on similar campuses. They think not only in terms of potential impacts of internal and external actions and events, but also in terms of the broader consequences for the institution. They tend to have a good sense of priorities for their own time and for effective delegation; the chief fiscal officer is responsible for timely cost accounting systems and effective controls, and the chief academic officer for implementing programmatic change with concern for quality and for faculty development, morale, creative responsiveness, and productivity.

Presidential Involvement in Fiscal Matters: The presidents of the strong institutions have a pervasive fiscal awareness, which forms a basis for monitoring of costs on the one hand, and for search for new revenue on the other. They are not only aware of fiscal priorities, but devote a substantial amount of time to revenue generation, whether in terms of new or expanding student markets, cost efficiencies, or new sources of revenue, and serve as the individual most actively responsible for improvement of revenue condition. Although the presidents generally delegate responsibility for qualitative aspects of the educational and support programs, they are keenly aware that the educational program--its quality, attractiveness, relevancy to constituents, and impact--is what they have to sell and further enhance. Also: they enjoy the relatively unaminous respect of their faculty, and appear effective in dissolving any competing faculty cliques.

Presidents' Relationship with their Board and Administrative Officers: The presidents of the strong institutions assume a leadership role in the effective definition and development of the role of their board of control, further mobilizing this group to institutional purposes. They have selected their own team of senior administrative officers; there are no vacancies in critical positions. Administrative structure and responsibilities are clear; the numbers of senior administrators reporting directly to the president are generally restricted to five or ten. The presidents view their responsibility as that of managing the institution, and that of the faculty to develop effective programs and to be effective instructional agents with the students.

The Presidents' View of Title III: With regard to Title III, the strong institution presidents have been personally active in familiarizing themselves with the legislation and regulations, fitting particular priorities therein, overseeing applications, assuring strict compliance with the definitions and ground rules, and monitoring progress. Significantly, whatever their stance on the question of Federal subsidy vs. support toward development of self-sufficiency through Title III, they have contingency plans for any interruption of support, and deliberate agendas for an increasing assumption of developmental

and operational costs. In short, they take an active personal responsibility for institutional development, assuring that their agents operate in a structure concerned not only with disciplinary integrity, but also with attention to revenue potential vs. costs, milestone attainment, and timely and accurate information in this regard.

b. The Role of Planning in Institutional Development

The distinguishing process factor for the strong institutions is an emphasis on effective long-range planning, and on the revenue and cost implications of trends, anticipated events, and projected changes. This involves, first, a serious concern with mission, involving what the institution has to offer, the particular subpopulations it serves and can serve, the distinctive values and strategies its educational program espouses, the role it serves for its controlling authority, and its broader public responsibilities. There is also a strong sense of trends and where these--and prospective events and circumstances--will take the institution without deliberate effort. Although many of the institutions in the sample did not have strong traditions of collegiality, some framework for faculty and staff participation is evident, with the planning process serving several functions: development of criteria for assessment of progress at the activity and program level as well as at the institutional level; the process by which this will be applied; the use of this process to establish priorities, goals, and decision rules; and the total planning enterprise to constitute a staff development function as well as an institutional development function.

c. Other Factors Associated with Institutional Viability

Proactive Concern with Mission and Student Markets: Other characteristics of the strong, as opposed to the vulnerable, institutions, attest to or are instrumentally compatible with the two foregoing elements. For example, the strong institutions tend, in anticipating or reacting to challenges or opportunities, to be proactive rather than reactive. New ventures build on existing strengths; rather than proliferate the mission, they are directed toward refining and enhancing it. In new program development, there is careful attention to market factors; in general, the institutions are moving in the direction of more pragmatic and vocationally-relevant program offerings, rather than holding blindly to the more traditional liberal arts and dominant professional areas (e.g., education, nursing) of one or two decades ago.

Management Emphases in the Strong Institutions: There is an emphasis on having fiscal data and other management information systems up, active, and timely, with administrators keeping themselves constantly up to date in their area of responsibility. Developmental activity managers are aware of the standards and criteria for critical decisions in regard to their ventures and performance. Major developmental thrusts are placed, within the institutional organization, where the operational responsibility will later reside, not in some separate special component. There is deliberate effort to make faculty and staff involvement and support rewarding and conducive in terms of both the facilitation of their job performance and of their personal development; faculty are something considerably less than the experts who call all shots, though their opinions and the lessons they learn are listened to by the president and relevant officers. Outside assistance is used where needed, and deployed

toward internal development of capability rather than continuing purchase of that capability as a service.

Characteristic Response of Strong Institutions to Title III: The Title III activities at the strong institutions are viewed as elite enterprise, not as adulterations of quality or values, nor as a compensation for mediocrity or its tolerance. Good business procedures are followed rigorously, and there is strict compliance with the rules and regulations of the Title III program; there is no shading or bending the rules, however reasonable any purpose therefor may seem. And, there is a tendency to respect and learn from management procedures required by Title III, and to adapt and extend them to other ongoing activities of the institution. The proportion of educational and general expenditures represented by Title III tends to be lower than in the vulnerable institutions, seldom exceeding 8 or 10 percent in the strong or positively developing institutions.

The Role of the Title III Coordinator: The two most significant observations as to the roles of the Title III coordinators were: (1) individuals in this role represent a considerable variety of backgrounds, competencies, and levels; and (2) the effective coordinators more frequently serve a staff, rather than a line, function--that is, they are coordinators. In the strong institutions, they tend to report directly to the president, or to the senior administrative officer who reflects and takes responsibility for implementing the president's developmental thrusts. They are active in assuring that the rules are followed, and have a respect for their developmental activity directors and the assigned grant monitors in Washington.

3. Contrasting Characteristics of the Vulnerable Institutions

For the vulnerable institutions, the obverse of the factors characterizing the strong institutions tends to obtain. That is, for example, the presidents are frequently surprised by fiscal problems when they erupt; involvement in funds generation or fiscal controls is infrequent or poorly directed; concerns are with present problems as they emerge, with little attention apparent to future exigencies or opportunities. Planning is preempted by the constant need to attend to crises; any mission statement or long-range plan appears to be a pro forma exercise rather than a deliberate effort. Fiscal data systems tend to be flawed, with problems both of accuracy and timely production. Some institutions hold blindly to the programs and values of two or three decades ago, with any new programs with potential for attracting students eroded by internal opposition. Though heavy investments in external assistance have been made, there is little residue to attest its effectiveness. There is no game plan for dealing with such an event as an unexpected cessation of Title III funds; there is either limited understanding or deliberate violation of Title III rules and regulations, and the strong faculty on these campuses tend frequently to view Title III as a reward for mediocrity. The Title III coordinators, and usually many of the activity directors, appear apprehensive about their futures.

F. Summary of Findings: Activity Level Analyses

1. Important Variations Among Activities Reviewed

The developmental activities nominated, selected, and studied intensively all represented, as noted, developmental effort that the institutional hosts felt had served them well. Nevertheless, they varied qualitatively in terms of the relevance of their objectives to mission and development; the time required for development; the degree to which their objectives were attained; and their detectable impact on the broader concerns of program quality, management effectiveness, and improvement of fiscal viability. The investigators paid considerable attention to the degree to which the institution had prepared realistically for--or was in the process of--incorporating the results of the development into the regularly supported program or functions; this served as a principal criterion of success of developmental effort, when it occurred together with general signs of institutional viability, such as enrollment increase, improved standings on the fiscal indicators, and improving risk position. Thus, in spite of the intent to focus on the success stories, there were again opportunities to contrast activities with similar objectives and strategies, and to use these contrasts to obtain a better understanding of the factors moderating their successful utilization.

2. Factors Associated with Effectiveness of Developmental Activities in General

Although the developmental activities represented a considerable variety of purposes, content, and strategies, there were a number of common factors associated with their judged effectiveness. The successful activities represented, for the most part, priorities recognized two or more years prior to their inclusion in a Title III or other funding appeal; they had stood a test of time and had emerged as reasonable priorities, some planning and effort had already been put into them, and the institution was ready to proceed in earnest at Title III application time. The active involvement and encouragement of the president, and the fit within his priorities as well as with any long-range plan, was apparent; as such, there was an integral relation to the constantly evolving mission. The objectives tended to be modest and realistic, rather than excessive. There was, as noted earlier in another context, a preconceived plan for their progressive incorporation or adoption into the regular institutional fabric. The real costs of development of operation were anticipated, with contingency plans for events such as unexpected cessation of funding; grant funds were applied so that their unexpected loss or scheduled termination would pose the fewest problems for the institution. Progress was monitored by the appropriate administrator and the president, as well as the Title III coordinator; milestones were taken seriously, and criteria for abortion or diversion, or change in activity director, were generally crystallized in advance. Developmental responsibility tended to be vested in competent individuals, with a good sense--on their part as well as that of their supervisors--as to when outside help was needed, and how to assure that competent assistance was found.

3. Factors Associated with the Effectiveness of Developmental Activities, by Activity Type

Findings with regard to particular activity type are not possible to summarize adequately within the space restrictions of an executive summary. Some highlights, however, may be noted.

a. Developmental Activities in the Administrative and Fiscal Management Domains

The Management Information Systems (MIS) development activities--whether focusing on fiscal data or other operational functions (e.g., transcript generation, course scheduling, personnel accounting)--appeared most variable in their progress. General factors noted--such as endorsement and involvement of president, good outside assistance, technically competent activity director--were most visible forces, but also significant were the openness and responsiveness of the activity director to the needs of his campus constituents; the careful development of particular priorities and software options and then attention to choice of hardware; the maintenance of formal systems as back-up until the new system was proven; and attention to defusing opposition to such systems, frequently through training programs for the adversaries as well as the advocates on campus.

The Planning, Management, and Evaluation (PME) Systems development activities, though frequently associated with MIS development, turned out to be a rather mixed bag, in that the label proved to encompass a considerable variety of activity; the focus ranged from clarification of mission to cost-benefit analyses to performance evaluation to developing a management by objectives procedure. That is, one or another component of a PME system was involved, but the several functions were infrequently integrated in any systematic way. The most frequent positive impact judged by internal observers as well as the site visitors was the promulgation of cost analysis procedures to those with budget-making and monitoring responsibilities. It was felt, however, that time and strategic intervention may be needed, and some presidents more fully convinced of the value of a systems approach to planning and improvement of fiscal management, if this effort is to be maximally and efficiently successful. Still, a number of presidents felt the values and procedures espoused by this kind of activity had been the signally most important contribution of Title III to their effectiveness as developmental agents, and to institutional improvement.

The institutional research activities were among those activities most likely to be abandoned--either upon cessation of funding, or the achievement of a good MIS. The effective functions in this area involved the availability of the MIS capability, the recognition of need by the president (and other managers) for particular compilations of data, and the responsiveness of the researcher to these requests. Deleterious factors appeared to be focus on routine production of reports of the researcher's choosing, and/or focus on assembly of data for required reports such as those for HEGIS, state authorities, or the United Negro College Fund.

The long-range planning activities reviewed, though few in number, were perhaps the most closely associated of any activity type with the developmental status rating of the institution. The successful efforts were of some long standing (8 to 10 years), with initiation considerably predating Title III or

other external support; origins included self-study or accrediting commission reports, or a new president placing a priority on planning. In the successful efforts, there was strategic involvement of a variety of faculty and staff, in a context of awareness of institutional nature and need; and, attention had moved, as these efforts matured, from production of a product to planning as a constantly developing process, as new tools were developed, new agendas for input data generated, and plans updated.

The resource enhancement activities--or activities concerned with developing new sources of revenue--generally focused on such matters as developing planned or deferred giving campaigns, development staff training, and/or alumni support development; in most instances, success was relatively modest. The effective efforts were those with clear objectives and pre-stated goals, with presidential support and involvement of faculty (and students), judicious use of consultants, an effective activity manager, and good follow-up.

b. Developmental Activities in the Educational and Support Programs Domain

In the program domain, the most exciting developmental activity--and the most frequent and obvious contributor to such critical areas as revitalization of mission and maintenance or increase of enrollment--was probably that concerned with new program development. The successful efforts had been preceded by a germination period, and not infrequently by some market survey; the fit with or relation to mission was clear-cut. Heavy use was made of existing strengths, as opposed to using the development to import or otherwise add all strengths required. Outside resources available were carefully noted and integrated. New programs generally represented priorities determined by the president, as opposed to faculty entrepreneurs; where origin was a product of faculty planning, presidential support still appeared critical for success. As for many other successful activities, particularly in the program area, the successful ventures were those with partial internal fiscal support from the beginning; Title III funds were also frequently supplemented by funds from other sources. A final observation in this area was that even the most successful new program development efforts required one, two, or perhaps more operational years to gain momentum, or to determine how well they might indeed be subscribed over the long haul.

Developmental activities designed to strengthen, refine, or update existing programs were, in the successful efforts, the result of deliberate concern to improve the quality and relevancy of academic areas that were considered clearly mainstays, or vital to what the institution was all about. Initiation came from the president or, more frequently, from a strong faculty member or department head (but with the president's endorsement); there was early planning and dialogue with professional societies, advisory boards, or special consultants. The successful program strengthening activities were frequently associated with setting accreditation (of the school or department involved) as a major goal, with the activity director manifesting careful planning and a catholic sense of the significance of upgrading.

Enhancements to the instructional enterprise embraced a variety of activity concerned with improvement of the content, instructional methods, and supporting materials and resources for the academic/technical program as a whole: development of competency-based instruction paradigms; curriculum review and revision;

faculty mini-grants for developing courses, materials, or strategies; service structures such as internships; or the creation of support centers (learning resource centers, CAI facilities, instructional media development services, etc.) Their origins were rooted in concern with improving opportunities for students to learn by altering instructional approaches; their impetus and medium involved the improvement of faculty competence, morale, and concern, as well as the revitalization of the curriculum and instructional methodology. And, in contrast to many other developmental activities, their origin and early leadership tended to be with the academic components--faculty, department heads, or academic dean, as opposed to the president.

Developmental activities that were classifed as student support service development were the most frequent kinds of activity nominated for intensive review. This category included 8 activities concerned with instruction in basic skills (or "developmental studies"), and 17 special service enterprises such as comprehensive counseling career services and placement, specialized retention programs, academic advising, and special assistance for a minority group. They differed from other activities in that with only two exceptions, Title III had contributed all external funding.

Perhaps as a function of the variety of approaches (and indeed, a need to tailor these activities to each campus in terms of its unique needs and values), there are few commonalities that distinguish the successful student support service efforts. These include a competent and dedicated activity director; special effort to assure that the effort is viewed as one of substance, rather than as a salvage operation; coordination with other efforts of similar purpose; establishment of realistic objectives at the beginning; and integration into the academic structure (or effort to assure its respectability with the faculty who are also consumers or beneficiaries of its products). These activities were invariably concerned with improving student performance and reduction of attrition, yet adequate in-house evaluation was usually preempted by design problems. (Nevertheless, the activities that engaged in careful record keeping and follow-up seemed superior in general.) Finally, it is noted that these efforts present particular problems of later cost recovery--either in fact, or in terms of producing clear evidence of improved retention and revenue that may be produced. Yet, the dedication of the institutions to these efforts, the advocacies of the directors and the faculty support they had been able to gain, seem to promise their continuation; the exceptions are principally in those instances of failure to gain faculty and presidential support, or to make participation for students respectable.

G. Other Observations with Particular Relevance for Title III Policy and Procedures

Apart from the findings related to factors associated with successful development at the institutional or activity levels, some other observations of potential import for Title III program policy and management emerge. These are concerned with: the public vs. private college development challenge and prospect; traditionally black institutions as a special case; the need to ascertain reasonable time for development in the different activity areas; and the differential contributions and options for later operational support (and contribution to institutional viability and self-sufficiency) of different kinds of developmental activity.

1. The Developmental Proposition for Public vs. Private Institutions

With regard to the public vs. private institution issue, it is believed significant that the public institutions tended to fall in the stable or "mixed" developmental categories of developmental status, rather than in the strong or vulnerable categories. Given public priorities and public support, the public institutions were generally not in any serious risk position; these institutions could have a president or chief fiscal officer in trouble, but the institutions themselves seemed not to be in real jeopardy. At the other end of the continuum: while private colleges can develop an operating surplus for future development or cushion, the public institutions are focused on meeting their budgets precisely; underspending is as much a sin as overspending is an impossibility. It was also noted that while private college boards are active advocates of their institutions, public boards (1) frequently represent other institutions as well;(2) generally put public needs ahead of institutional aspirations; and (3) are frequently subject to or involved with other decisionmakers and controllers of development, e.g., coordinating boards, state budget authorities, or the general assemblies. No instances were found where local controls were not effective in assuring that all efforts be in accordance with state plans (or personnel or purchasing policies, for that matter).

This means that development as a function of external support is a different proposition for the public colleges from what it is for the private colleges. At the least, none are in danger of closing in a way that Title III could prevent; and funds will be found for what the states or other public funding authorities see as prime needs for programmatic development, albeit at the possible expense of other existing programs or budget line items. These are powerful moderators of development with positive and negative implications--and what is positive depends on one's particular vantage point. This is not to say that Title III has had less impact or accomplished less in the public institutions; it has obviously provided investment capital that has been well used. Some instances were noted where success of a Title III activity had convinced the state budget authority to provide the operational funds required. But other stronger factors determine survival or risk position than what can be accomplished through Title III, which serves to sweeten the pot, not revitalize the institution.

2. The Developmental Proposition for Traditionally Black Institutions

With regard to black institutions as a "special case," it was noted that good management is good management, good instruction is good instruction, and that white institutions have no corner on these markets. Per-student educational and general expenditures tended to be higher for the black institutions than their non-black counterparts, which may be a function of the possibility that larger proportions of aid-eligible students make tuition increases less threatening, or a fluke of the sample (since focus was on the most heavily supported institutions). Traditionally black institutions do have unique problems: e.g., erosion of faculty and the better qualified students by their movement to desegregated traditionally white institutions. The strong black institutions appeared to have a new and more profound awareness that although any graduate now has an edge on finding employment in areas formerly restricted for blacks, he or she must be as competent as the professional peers to hold the job; a renewed and sophisticated emphasis on learning

and performance seemed to be emerging as perhaps the special current distinctiveness of the traditional mission of the predominantly black institutions in the non-segregated higher education community.

3. Time Required for Effective Developmental Activity

With regard to time required for effective development: this varies, of course, as a function of the kind and complexity of the particular developmental activity. Yet, within particular sets of a given activity (1) more time than recognized by the Title III award period generally tended to be needed (although this did not pose a severe problem for the strong institutions); (2) time for development tended to vary substantially from institution to institution; and (3) longer time (than that required by other institutions) to reach operational status frequently was associated with activity failure or institutional lethargy. This combination of circumstances tend to make endpoints obscure, and some activities can be continued through such devices as renaming or adding new components for development, vitiating Title III intent. It was recommended that some formal determination be made of what constitutes reasonable time for development in particular areas, for use in monitoring, for determining when technical assistance may be needed, or for decisions on non-competitive continuation awards or new applications.

4. The Potential Contribution of the Developmental Activity to Institutional Viability

With regard to the differential potential of developmental activities to attract or generate operational support, it was noted that in the field a limited number of options exist, with these options a function both of activity characteristics and their host institutions. To be specific: although some activities are of a one-time only nature or permit a higher order of functioning with no difference in costs, some upon completion of development do involve new continuing operational costs. These can be met in a limited number of ways: by the generation of new revenue through the operation of the activity; by cost savings the new activity generates; by displacing dollars needed from activities considered less desirable; by using the activity success or developed capability to attract new support from regular sources (if a public institution), or from new sources; or by separate activity for generating new revenue in general, through tuition increase, new external funding sources, improvement in endowment income, etc.

It was also noted that although the developmental activity is the unit of investment, significant impact of any specific activity on the broader institutional condition with regard to viability is generally implausible, and frequently obscure, given the complexity of factors constituting fiscal viability; and, that some activities--e.g., qualitative improvements in program, additional effort to provide useful academic support services to students, or computational systems that improve efficiencies but tempt the addition of new desirable functions or require hardware upgrading--are more likely to generate additional costs than new revenue or cost savings. It is believed that although the responsibility for selecting developmental activities for investment and pursuit is properly vested with the institution, neither institutional representatives nor Title III program managers should assume that any allowable activity provides developmental promise for any institution. More awareness is needed as to of the probable impacts of specific activities on institutional

condition in terms of costs or revenue potential. This is a significant lesson that is believed to have been learned from the presidents of the strong institutions.

5. Development as an Institutional Proposition

If the concern with institutional development is taken seriously, the study findings strongly suggest that this concern must encompass the fiscal and enrollment bottom lines for the institution. It was no surprise that the institutions building attention to fiscal impact into every decision were those most likely to be moving positively, or to be secure in their own right. It would seem critical, for application review, year to year monitoring, and evaluation purposes, that Title III program management, like the strong institution presidents and their boards, give more formal attention to indicators signaling progress at the institutional level in terms of increased fiscal viability and improved risk position. Winning the developmental battle is threatened if program quality suffers; both quality and the institution are lost if expenditures exceed revenues for very long.